

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PSDC, PFOR, TD, US, UN, RQ, KS

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY RE KOREA AND
PUERTO RICO

REF: STATE 188800

1. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRIME MINISTER DR. ERIC WILLIAMS
RECEIVED ME AT HIS HOME TODAY, WHERE I DELIVERED TO HIM
THE SECRETARY'S PERSONAL LETTER (REFTEL) REGARDING THE
ISSUES OF KOREA AND PUERTO RICO AT THE NON-ALIGNED
SUMMIT AND UNGA.

2. DR. WILLIAMS ACKNOWLEDGED TRINIDAD'S INTEREST IN
PREVENTING EXPLOITATION OF PUERTO RICO'S STATUS IN
INTERNATIONAL FORA AND REPEATED HIS OFT-STATED RECOGNITION
THAT THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE HAD A FREE OPPORTUNITY TO
EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THEIR FUTURE. WE SPOKE OF THE
DIALOGUE WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER INITIATED EARLIER
THIS YEAR WITH THE PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT, AND HE
INDICATED HIS REGRET THAT THE TRINIDAD NATIONAL ELECTIONS
HAD DELAYED HIS DISPATCH OF A MINISTERIAL DELEGATION TO
SAN JUAN TO FURTHER THAT DIALOGUE. HE SAID NO CABINET
MINISTER WOULD BE ABLE TO GO ABROAD AGAIN UNTIL AFTER
THE ELECTIONS, AND THE DATE FOR THE LATTER WAS STILL NOT
SET (NOTE: CONSTITUTIONALLY, SEPTEMBER 18 IS THE LATEST
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DATE POSSIBLE). MEANWHILE, HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD

SEE IF SOME LOWER-RANKING OFFICIALS MIGHT NOT PROCEED TO SAN JUAN TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ONGOING POLICY PENDING THE FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AFTER ELECTIONS.

3. I STRESSED THE SIGNIFICANCE WITH WHICH WE LOOKED TO ACTIVE GOTT COOPERATION REGARDING PUERTO RICO IN VIEW OF THE PRESTIGIOUS ROLE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PLAYED IN THE CARIBBEAN AND ITS MEMBERSHIP ON THE COMMITTEE OF 24 IN THE UNITED NATIONS. WILLIAMS DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY, BUT COMMENTED THAT A PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY DELEGATION WAS MAKING THE ROUNDS OF THE CARIBBEAN TRYING TO INTERNATIONALIZE THEIR PLEA FOR "INDEPENDENCE", AND HE WAS GOING TO "HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM".

4. REGARDING KOREA, I EVOKED LESS INTEREST. AT ONE POINT, WILLIAMS SAID THAT HE "HAD MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO THINK ABOUT" (I.E. THE ELECTION). NEVERTHELESS, HE DID NOT SEEM OFFENDED TO BE APPROACHED ON THIS ISSUE AND EVENTUALLY STATED THAT THE GOTT WOULD DO NOTHING TO OVERTURN THE PRESENT STATUS QUO IN KOREA, SINCE THAT STATUS QUO SEEMED TO PRESERVE THE PEACE. HE WARNED ME, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOTT WOULD NOT TAKE A FORWARD POSITION OR VERY ACTIVE ROLE ON THE KOREAN ISSUE IN ANY FORUM. HE ALSO CAUTIONED THAT SINCE T&T PARLIAMENT HAD BEEN DISSOLVED, HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ONLY CARETAKER STATUS UNTIL THE FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AFTER THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS, AND IT WAS NOT A TIME FOR BOLD NEW INITIATIVES OR ACTIONS IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FIELD. WE COULD EXPECT LITTLE BEYOND THE CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD TURN OVER THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO HIS FOREIGN MINISTER (JOSEPH) FOR FURTHER COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ON THE KOREAN ASPECT.

5. COMMENT: THE TONE OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER EVIDENTLY IMPRESSED WILLIAMS, ALTHOUGH CLEARLY KOREA WAS AN ISSUE HE PREFERRED NOT TO BE BOTHERED WITH. I AM NOT SANGUINE THAT WE HAVE ANY REAL CHANCE OF DOING BETTER THAN CONTINUED GOTT ABSTENTION ON KOREA VOTES, BUT I TRIED TO IMPRESS UPON THE PRIME MINISTER THAT INDEED OUR AIMS WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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PARALLEL IN DESIRING TO FORESTALL ACTIONS OR DIVISIVE DEBATES WHICH COULD SERVE TO DESTABILIZE THE CURRENT SITUATION. HOPEFULLY GOTT COUNCILS FOR MODERATION WILL BE HEARD IN CONFERENCE CORRIDORS. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO INFLUENCE AT COLOMBO, HOWEVER, IS LIKELY TO BE RELATIVELY SLIGHT SINCE WILLIAMS INFORMED ME HE CANNOT PERMIT A CABINET MINISTER TO BE AWAY FROM HOME AT THIS TIME AND THUS THE GOTT DELEGATION WILL BE LED BY A

RELATIVELY LOW-RANKING OFFICIAL WITH LITTLE FREEDOM
OF INITIATIVE OR INFLUENCE AT A HEADS OF GOVERNMENT
GATHERING. THUS DOMESTIC POLITICS TAKES PRECEDENCE
OVER INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IN THIS DEMOCRACY AT ELECTION
TIME.
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